



Spring Storms 2006—Agricultural Land Flood Damage

Inside this issue:

<i>Gasoline—Am I Getting What I Pay For?</i>	2
<i>Food For Thought How Much Soil is Left?</i>	2
<i>Fruit, Nut and Vegetable News</i>	3
<i>Aerial Flood Photo Spring Storms 2006</i>	3
<i>Ag Goes “Tech” at the Technology Fair</i>	4
<i>Am I Using Pesticides Safely?</i>	5
<i>In Memoriam A Tribute</i>	6

From the vantage point of a helicopter, Ann Juette, Agricultural Assistant II, tours and documents the flood damage to ag land as a result of the recent storms. Ann is in charge of the Ag Commissioner’s GIS (Geographic Information System) mapping and will be instrumental in reporting the extent of the flood damage to state and local agencies.

On April 10, 2006, Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger declared a state of emergency in seven Northern Central California counties, including Stanislaus. On April 11, 2006, the Board of Supervisors proclaimed the existence of a local emergency.

(Cont’d—Page 3)



Above: A Stanislaus County helicopter flight enabled Ann Juette, Agricultural Assistant, and Deputy Sealer Dan Bernaciak to view the flood damage from the spring storms.

Welcome to the first edition of our quarterly newsletter!

Our goal is to provide useful and informative news to our customers.

We welcome your feedback on this premiere issue.

Contact us:

Agcom50@mail.co.
stanislaus.ca.us

(209) 525-4730

Ag Commissioner/ Sealer Dennis Gudgel

“Stop by and join me for a cup of coffee!” This is one of Dennis Gudgel’s favorite invitations to customers. If you haven’t yet taken him up on his offer, stop by the office, located at the Stanislaus



County Agricultural Center, 3800 Cornucopia Way, Suite B, Modesto, or call him at (209) 525-4730 to speak with him or set up an appointment. If you have any issues, comments or concerns (compliments are welcome too!), he would be happy to hear from you.

Gasoline—Am I Getting What I am Paying For?



Dan Bernaciak
Deputy Sealer of
Weights & Measures

With the price of gasoline climbing to over \$3.00 per gallon, every trip to fill up the tank hurts the pocketbook and the question often comes up, “Am I really getting the amount of fuel that I am paying for?”

It is the responsibility of Weights and Measures

to check the accuracy of commercial devices such as gas pumps.

Every year in Stanislaus County, Inspectors from the Department of Agriculture and Weights & Measures test over 4400 gas pumps for accurate delivery of product.

The good news is that traditionally, gas pumps have been some of the most accurate devices checked by Weights and Measures. Over 97% of the pumps tested

in 2005 and year to date in 2006 have been found to be “in tolerance”.

“In tolerance” means that the gas pump is delivering fuel within a range that has been established as being acceptably accurate. For gas pumps, this range is one-half of one percent (0.5%). On a 20-gallon fill, the established tolerance for a gas pump would allow the pump to deliver 20 gallons, plus or minus 1 and 2/3 cup.

Data collected over the last 3 years shows that, when a gas pump is “out of tolerance”, 48% of the time it is “giving fuel away”. Only 8% of the time is the pump “shorting” the customer. The balance of the problems, (44%), fall into other types of categories.

Drivers should be aware that the stated capacity of a vehicle’s fuel tank is only an approximate value. Manufacturers have estimated that fuel tank volume can vary by up to 3% based on variables such as the manufacturing process. How level the vehicle is during the fueling process can also affect the amount of fuel the tank can hold. Drivers who try to “top off” their tank by repeatedly activating the nozzle after the initial shut off, may actually be pumping fuel back into the stations storage tank through the



pump’s vapor recovery system.

Consumers should pay attention when fueling their vehicle. After activating the pump, wait 5 to 10 seconds before dispensing fuel through the nozzle. During this time watch the pump to see if the display which indicates the dollar amount and amount of fuel purchased move. If movement occurs, this indicates a problem with the system, which needs to be addressed. The station should be notified of the problem and notifying the Department of Agriculture and Weights & Measures will allow a follow-up to be made to ensure the problem was corrected.

If consumers believe that there is a problem with a gas pump, they should notify Weights and Measures. They should be prepared to provide the following information:

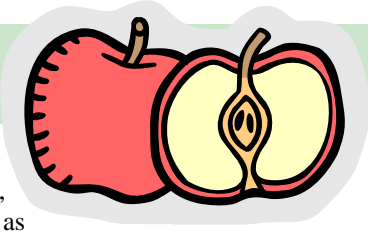
1. The name and address of the station.
2. The pump number and the grade of fuel purchased (87, 89, or 91 octane gasoline or diesel)
3. The day and time of day the purchase was made.
4. Whether or not the opposite side of the fuel pump was in use during their purchase.
5. The amount of fuel purchased.

Weights and Measures in Stanislaus County may be contacted by calling (209) 525-4730, by fax at (209) 525-4790, or by email at:

agcom50@mail.co.stanislaus.ca.us.

“Drivers should be aware that the stated capacity of a vehicle’s fuel tank is only an approximate value.”

Food For Thought



- ◆ The Apple represents the Earth.
- ◆ First, slice the apple into fourths, three of which you are to discard as they represent water areas.
- ◆ Take the remaining slice and divide it in half. Discard half, as it is uninhabited deserts, swamps and arctic areas.
- ◆ Divide the remaining piece in fourths. Discard three of these pieces as they represent land that is too rocky, too wet, too hot or too poor for crop production.
- ◆ The section that is left is one-thirty-second of the original apple.
- ◆ Peel off the section. The peeling represents the thin layer of soil that is available for producing all of the world’s food supply.
- ◆ That’s how much soil there is on earth for growing food.

Fruit, Nut and Vegetable News



Kamal Bagri
Deputy Ag
Commissioner

Melons

Melons season is coming and we are hoping to see increased acreage for Stanislaus County this year. The Cantaloupe Advisory Board is requiring counties to do cooler inspections this year along with our regular field inspections for sugar testing. All the cantaloupes stored

over five days in the coolers are subject to re-inspection by Agricultural Commissioners staff.

The melons for sale at the grocery stores have to meet certain standards also. Under the Fruit & Vegetable Standardization program, we inspect different commodities to see if they are meeting the standards set by the State of California. A new law, which went into effect this year after AB Parra 520 was passed, will



authorize Commissioners to fine up to \$5,000 for violations of Fruit, Nut and Vegetable Standards. So next time you pick up a melon or any other fruit from the store and are not satisfied with the quality, give us a call.

Farmers Markets

Farmers Markets are a good source of fresh vegetables and fruits grown by our farmers. Certified Producers seen at the Farmers Market

will be paying more for the services provided by our staff due to an increase in fees effective July 1, 2006.

Almonds/Phytosanitary Certificates

California produces 80% of the world's almonds and ships 70% of its total crop to more than 80 countries throughout the world. Stanislaus County accounted for 14.51% of the almond crop, producing 132,118,041 pounds for the 2005-2006 season.

Spring Storms 2006—Agricultural Land Flood Damage

(Continued from Page 1)

Ann Juette reported, "We arrived at the Modesto City-County Airport on a gray, overcast afternoon. After helicopter lift-off, we soared above the rivers. Along the Tuolumne River we saw high water in vineyards, young almond orchards, and alfalfa

and grain crop fields. Along the lower Stanislaus River we viewed flooded pasture areas. On the westside of the San Joaquin River, long fingers of water that had seeped under the levees were visible. Tomato grounds in some areas were blanketed by water. Around the Grayson area,

some fields of grain and alfalfa were completely submerged. The closer we got to Newman, the more flooding we saw. Water covered River Road in spots at the southern end of the river area. Many of the riparian areas on all three rivers were underwater, which may extract a toll on the local endangered and threatened animals species in those areas."

It is estimated that over 75% of the County's apricot crop has been lost as a result of the storms. Suffering over a 30% loss are cherries, as well as the early plantings of fresh and processing tomatoes. Hail damage was reported on the eastside of the County and farmers/ranchers are reporting an increase in livestock mortality due to the weather. Preliminary agricultural damage/loss estimates exceed \$31 million.

The Export Certification program is one of the most important programs run by the Agricultural Commissioner's Office. It is an industry-funded program and runs on the fees charged to the exporters. Last season (July 2005—March 2006), Stanislaus County issued 4,153 Federal Phytosanitary Certificates going to different parts of the world. The Board of Supervisors recently approved an increase in the Phytosanitary Certification fee, effective July 1, 2006.



Above: A bird's eye view of flooded grain fields near the Tuolumne River, west of Paradise Road.

Did you Know? Almond acreage in California has increased in recent years to the point that growers need two-thirds of the nation's bees to pollinate the trees' blossoms in early spring.

(CFBF Food and Farm News, Oct. 2005)



Ag Goes “Tech” at the Technology Fair



(L-R) Ann Juette, Wendy Hahn and Tina Graver brought their “tech” skills and knowledge to share at the Technology Fair.

Our department recently exhibited the technology we use at the Connect 2006 Technology Fair held on April 25th at the Modesto Center Plaza. The event focused on how local business and technology help make us more efficient and productive, both at home and in the workplace. The Fair highlighted area business and technology uses, advances, and opportunities.

“This technology allows growers who use restricted materials to report the pesticides they use over the web.”



Tina Graver explains the benefits of E-Trace to Robert Beckler, GIS Coordinator, City of Modesto Information Services.

Showcased were four of the technologies that we use everyday. Tina Graver, Ag Assistant, spoke with attendees about E-Trace. This technology uses GPS (Global Positioning System) tracking through our cell phones to locate and dispatch employees in ‘real time’. The technology is web-

based and can be accessed through the web. Employees can be dispatched from one location to another using cell phone messaging and two-way alert functions. Our customers benefit from this technology as we can efficiently respond to requests for quarantine inspections of nursery stock (including Glassy-wing Sharpshooter inspections) and requests for phytosanitary certificate issuance and inspection.

Wendy Hahn, Agricultural Inspector, highlighted our web-based Restricted Material Management System for pesticide use reporting. This technology allows growers who use restricted materials to report the pesticides they use over the web. Using a user name and password, they can transmit this required data quickly. Before this technology was available, the growers would have to hand complete form and either fax them into our office or drop them off in a drop box. Now, a few mouse clicks and they’re finished! (If you are interested in this program, contact our department at 525-4730.)

Ann Juette demonstrated our Geographic Information System (GIS) program which uses crop layers, water feature layers, and watershed drainage areas to track changes in the cropping patterns and water contamina-

tion issues. The crop layer is updated each year after the growers come in to get their restricted materials permit. Growers report the crops they will grow on their farms, and Ann enters those crops onto the grower’s farm shown on the GIS crop layer. The GIS is also used to map areas in emergency situations, such as Exotic Newcastle Disease outbreaks in poultry. GIS is used to map other events, such as bee kills and water contamination.

The Fair also featured workshops taught by local experts on topics as varied as Microsoft Access Tips, Technology Security Strategies, and Internet Research Mining/GIS Applications. If you missed the Technology Fair this year, be sure to mark your calendar for this time next year and watch for the date in the Modesto Bee.

California is The Top Agricultural State...

...and its Central Valley is the most productive region in the nation. If it were a state, the valley would rank as the largest agricultural producer in the nation, with total cash receipts of over \$16.7 Billion. Eight counties—San Joaquin, Stanislaus, Merced, Fresno, Kings, Kern, Madera and Tulare—produce more than half of the state’s agriculture.

California Ag Statistics Service

Am I Using Pesticides Safely?



Kevin Gonzalves
Deputy Agricultural
Commissioner

With an increasing visibility of pesticide mishaps occurring in California, Cal EPA’s Department of Pesticide Regulation has stepped up its enforcement stance of “No Tolerance for Pesticide Related Illnesses”.

Are you doing everything possible to protect your family farm from increased liability when you use pesticides on you farm, ranch or industrial processing plant? Are you still remaining competitive while keeping your employees, family and your property secure?

The Agricultural Commissioner’s office may be able to help you find the answers to these questions. The pesticide use division of the Agricultural Commissioner’s office can help you with training and educational resources.

We will all use pesticides from time to time around the house to control ants around our outdoor barbe-

que area, or on the job to prevent rodents from destroying our crops and commodities. But what are a few simple steps to assure that we keep our environment free from damaging pests and our families safe too? Just follow a few simple rules: Read the label before you use the pesticide. Dress appropriately; remember sandals, sunglasses and a tank top will not protect your skin and eyes from pesticide exposures. And if you’re an employer, you have a responsibility to keep your employees safe.

The Agricultural Commissioner’s office is here to serve the community. Protecting our local resources, our water supply, our workforce and providing a comfortable living space for our family and community is important to us. We can help a private citizen better understand how to handle pesticides. We can also offer industry trainings to assure that your employees understand how to apply pesticides while giving guidelines on how to protect your business by reducing liability. That can be done in a few simple steps... Train your employees and document it! Make sure your employees have been tested and certified if possible.

We can provide training for the trainers, so that you can give the message clearly to

your staff. Hand out personal protective equipment and make sure the employees follow proper use. Employer discipline programs don’t have to be intimidating, but every employer should implement a program. Training programs need to be clearly written and acknowledged by both the employee and the employers.

Together we can be proud to say we do have the greatest County in California! We do care about our community, and that means we are sensitive to our environmental needs. Let’s face it; nobody wants to harm the environment or the community. We live here and we will take care of our community.

Feel free to give us a call for your free assessment of your operation or if you just have a question about how to properly use a home use pesticide, we can help. There are a number of commercial resources and we can guide you in the right direction.

(Right) Deputy Ag Commissioner Kevin Gonzalves works with a local grower to ensure pesticide safety.



“The Agricultural Commissioner’s Office is here to serve the community.”

Stanislaus County
Department of Agriculture and
Weights and Measures

Stanislaus County Board of Supervisors

Bill O'Brien, District 1 Jeff Grover, District 3
Tom Mayfield, District 2 Ray Simon, District 4
Jim De Martini, District 5

3800 Cornucopia Way Suite B
Modesto CA 95358

Phone: 209-525-4730

Fax: 209-525-4790

Email: agcom50@mail.co.stanislaus.ca.us

Publication Design/Coordination: Cynthia Darmstandler
cynthiad@mail.co.stanislaus.ca.us

WE'RE ON THE WEB!
WWW.STANAG.ORG

Our Mission:
Support and protect the well-being of
Agriculture, Business and the Community.



The staff of the Department of Agriculture and Weights & Measures are always ready and willing to assist you. If you have any questions or comments, please contact our office at (209) 525-4730.



In Memoriam—A Tribute to One of Our Own



Dave Krediet, Ag/Weights & Measures Inspector III

As customers of Weights and Measures, you may have known or worked with the “larger than life” Dave Krediet.

Dave Krediet, Agricultural/Weights & Measures Inspector III, for Stanislaus County, passed away April 14, 2006, due to lymphoma.

Dave began working for Stanislaus County in June of 2000, after working

for many years in the scale industry. Dave was responsible for setting up the County’s metrology lab as well as assisting Kern County with their metrology lab. Dave received his Metrologist certification as a result of his training in Maryland. He built relationships with law enforcement (CHP, Caltrans and local police departments) for the wheel load weigher program. He identified problems on type approval with certain devices and worked closely with the state on this matter.

According to Ag Commissioner Sealer Dennis Gudgel, “Dave’s life was Weights and Measures. He was one of the most knowledgeable Weights & Measures Inspectors for scales and devices in the State of California. He was very well respected throughout the Weights and Measures community and also with the industry. Since he came from a scale industry background, he understood what industry needed.”

Dave will be sorely missed as both a professional and a co-worker and friend.